

April 27, 2010

MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION HELD APRIL 27, 2010

A Work Session of the City Council of the City of Hopewell, Virginia, was held Tuesday, April 27, 2010 at 6:30 PM in the City Council Chambers, Municipal Building, 300 North Main Street, Hopewell, Virginia.

PRESENT: Brenda S. Pelham, Mayor
N. Gregory Cuffey, Vice Mayor
Christina J. Luman-Bailey, Councilor
Curtis W. Harris, Councilor
Kenneth B. Emerson, Councilor
Gerald S. Stokes, Councilor
K. Wayne Walton, Councilor

Ann M. Romano, City Clerk
Edwin C. Daley, City Manager
Thomas E. Lacheney, City Attorney

Mayor Pelham opened the work session at 6:30 PM. Roll call was taken as follows:

Mayor Pelham	-	yes
Vice Mayor Cuffey	-	yes
Councilor Bailey	-	yes
Councilor Harris	-	yes
Councilor Emerson	-	yes
Councilor Stokes	-	yes
Councilor Walton	-	yes

Prayer was offered by Vice Mayor Cuffey, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

WORK SESSION

1. **Woodside Court Storm Drainage – Johnnie Butler, City Engineer** – Mr. Butler distributed to Council copies of Woodside Court – Drainage Study, General Presentation Notes (filed in the City Clerk's Office). He noted that this was first presented to Council in August 2008.

DISCUSSION: Ditches can be made more functional, but during big storms it probably will not help. NEMO (DCR/DEQ/CBLAT) could be of assistance to the City with these efforts. Flooding is due to decreased absorption ability. Because this project is located in Ward #4, Councilor Stokes requested a meeting with area residents of Woodside Court to go over this presentation with the City Engineer. The City needs dedication of easements to residents' property at that time also. Since August 2008 the City Engineer has attempted to get grant funds but was unsuccessful due to lack of funds for channel improvements. There is housing construction in the area (Cobblestone and Parkview Developments), and impervious materials compromise run off. In planning to begin this project the City first needs more budget appropriations for easements, etc. (\$50,000 per year); need the channel to operate. Second, the City needs \$150,000-200,000 in the budget for Capital Improvement Project budget for several years. Preliminary Engineering must be done. A development reimbursement arrangement could accelerate that. The City is presently maintaining the project on what is there now. Improvements to the ditch line could be done at a later time, but the channel must be done first. The \$50,000 for one year would be used for clearing, etc. That would provide a line item in the budget to clean out the channel. It should be

on an annual basis. The issue of piping came up, but an open channel would carry much more than a pipe could. It is important to keep the residents informed throughout the project. Water last came over the banks and into the street five Sundays ago. The project would be designed as a 10-year storm project. The last 100-year storm was Hurricane Agnes in 1972. Property owners are responsible for “light maintenance” of their properties, such as lawn mowing, etc. Easement maintenance would only happen if the City went in and did something and it failed. According to the City Manager, the next step after citizen meetings is to develop a preliminary estimate of the cost for phases. That would include adjacent property owners.

Cost of Human Services Building – Johnnie Butler, City Engineer and Phil Elliott, Director of Public Works – Mr. Elliott distributed a letter addressed to the City Manager, dated April 27, 2010, re: Human Services Building, Request for Authorization to Approve Change Orders #1 and #2 (copy filed in the City Clerk’s Office). Another letter was distributed that was addressed to Mr. Butler, dated April 26, 2010, from Townes Site Engineering, re: Subsurface Evaluation of Fill Material, Hopewell Human Services Building, Townes Project No. 20090045. The issue was the discovery of unsuitable soil at the site. There was a large layer of organic soils; shrink swell clay; foundations from pre-existing buildings; etc. Dr. Daley indicated that City Council had appropriated \$3.3M. The money must be appropriated when the project is ready to spend it. Mr. Butler reported that the soil under the pavement was good. Toward Hopewell Street the pavement has not fallen apart and should be fine. According to Ms. Griffin, City Planner, the site plans were approved today and the footings were poured today. The City Manager reminded Council that the location of the building was set by Council six months ago. The work was begun with the Land Disturbance Permit and there is no problem with the footings. The cost for the two change orders is \$64,942.05. Council consensus was to go forward to approve the appropriation.

2. **Planning Commission Recommendations for Oversized Vehicles Parked on City Streets – Tevya Griffin, City Planner** – Mrs. Griffin referred to a memo to Council dated April 23, 2010 re: Trailers, Buses, Watercraft and Other Recreational Vehicles (copy filed in the City Clerk’s Office), the current zoning language and the proposed ordinance amendments.

DISCUSSION: Some home owners have 50-100 ft. front yards with paved driveways. There must be a minimum sized lot before parking is allowed in the front yard. There was lengthy discussion about all of the possibilities that could arise and be addressed. Dr. Daley indicated that it had been suggested that the permits should go through the Police Chief and be approved by the Transportation Safety Board, so that they could look at it and know where it is and what it is. Community Policing would be aware and keep a watch on the vehicle. Recommendations came from the Planning Commission.

3. **CDBG Budget Vice Mayor Greg Cuffey and Tevya Griffin, City Planner** – Tevya Griffin, City Planner reported on those agencies seeking CDBG funding, and how much the committee recommended:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Program</u>	<u>Requested</u>	<u>Recommended</u>
CARES	Women’s Homeless Shelter	\$ 5,000	\$ 3,000
VA Supportive Housing	Financial Foundation	\$10,000	\$ 1,000
Foster Grandparents	Foster Grandparents	\$ 6,000	\$ 1,000
H/PG Healthy Families	Home Visitation Program	\$ 7,000	\$ 6,000
Big Brothers/Big Sisters	Little Moments, Big Magic in Hopewell	\$16,250	\$ 3,380
James House	Shelter from the Storm	\$ 5,000	\$ 3,000
Rec & Parks Dept.	Hopewell Youth Sports League	\$ 5,000	\$ 2,000
Rec & Parks Dept.	Hopewell Respite Care Group	\$15,000	\$ 4,000
Rec & Parks Dept.	Rainbow Summer Program	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000
Boys/Girls Club	Project Learn	\$ 5,000	\$ 4,000
Neighborhood Network	Citizens Handbook	\$ 577	<u>\$ 577</u>
			\$31,957

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In addition, requests were received from Yeshua's House Too; Sunnyside Avenue – Dead end at Arlington Playground (citizen request for broadened cul-de-sac); 19th Avenue (citizen request for curb & gutter); and, 2600 Boston Street (citizen request for curb and gutter). Mrs. Griffin gave a brief overview of each of the agencies who applied for CDBG funding.

DISCUSSION: Big Brothers/Big Sisters – last year two Hopewell students were serviced through the funds in that program. The one-on-one mentoring is separate from the larger project. There are administrative costs from several separate agencies. Carter G. Woodson Middle School has approximately 20 students who participate in BBBS events four times annually. CDBG funds help pay for those events. Regarding sports through the Recreation Department, 1,400 children participate. According to the data, 980 qualify under low income. In 2007 participants started to be required to pay for sports. An allocation is approved each year. Each quarter they know how much they have from CDBG. Then a quarterly bill is sent to the City Planner to be paid. A question was posed to the City Manager of how many children pay for sports and how many play for free. The Federal government has not yet told Hopewell how much money will be allocated for CDBG for this year. Dr. Cobb from the Virginia Baptist Children's Home addressed Council to provide some additional information and answer questions. Regarding the signage downtown, that is not the same as way finding. The Way Finding Signage was never done. The Downtown Partnership Committee felt this was a better compromise. There are contingency funds available from leftover funds from years past. There was some concern to provide support to Hopewell citizens. Council had many questions to be answered regarding the Virginia Baptist Children's Home: Overall fee? Transportation? Will funding be used from the School Board system? How will Hopewell children be supported by this? How many career development centers are in this region? How will the Baptist Home be different?

The City Manager reported that the tax abatements have been reinstated, and that there is a \$1M cap. However, he feels that the cap should be removed. He would like to work on an amendment for Council to consider. There was some Council concern about taxes that could be lost.

4. **Updated Amendments to the Noise Ordinance – Tom Lacheney, City Attorney** – Mr. Lacheney explained to Council the reason for the updates to the Noise Ordinance. The Virginia Supreme Court refers to “unreasonable noise.” Council had approved an ordinance based on a decibel meter; however, the City does not possess such a device. The new draft is in compliance with the Virginia Supreme Court. Also, such an offense could be a civil penalty vs. a criminal penalty.
6. **Budget Update – Dr. Daley, City Manager** – (1) He visited the Mallonee Lofts. The community opening is in six weeks, and the first loft has already been rented. (2) The Butterworth Loft project is moving along also. (3) He will be bringing the preliminary budget to the May Council meeting. The budget will be \$41M. That includes \$408,000 received for the school bond. The net result of the operating budget will be \$274,000 less than the current budget for this year. The General Fund will finish up in the next two weeks. Finally, he wished everyone good luck in the Council elections.

REPORTS OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

Councilor Walton reported the 40th Anniversary of Earth Day.

Councilor Emerson urged everyone to vote on May 4.

Councilor Bailey reported that at the Ward #1 meeting held on April 26, the issue of signage came up.

Mayor Pelham shared that a teacher is the first person to have rented a loft at Mallonee Lofts. Major General Jim Chambers will be leaving Ft. Lee. Mayor Pelham reminded Councilors to RSVP to the Senior Citizens Hall of Fame.

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ADJOURN

At 9:30 PM motion was made by Vice Mayor Cuffey, and seconded by Councilor Harris, to adjourn the meeting. Upon the roll call, the vote resulted:

Councilor Harris	-	yes
Councilor Emerson	-	yes
Councilor Stokes	-	yes
Councilor Walton	-	yes
Mayor Pelham	-	yes
Vice Mayor Cuffey	-	yes
Councilor Bailey	-	yes

Brenda S. Pelham, Mayor

Ann M. Romano, City Clerk